

Connecticut General Assembly Education Committee  
 Testimony of Natalie Langlaise Hartford Resident  
 Advocate for Equity in Education  
 March 3, 2021

Good morning Senator McCrory, Senator Berthel, Representative Sanchez, Representative McCarty and other members of the Education Committee. I am Natalie Langlaise, Hartford resident and community advocate for Equity in Education. Thanks for the opportunity to testify before you today on education proposals on your agenda.

**S.B. No. 948 - I stand in support of S.B. No. 948**, An Act Addressing Education Funding And Racial Equity In Connecticut. On April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2019 I presented before the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus regarding the dire need for racial equity in educational funding and while the wheels of change and justice turn slowly it is pleasing to see that we are here at this point of reckoning.

The disparities and shortfalls of our education system are directly linked to skewed funding practices and policy which continue to further disenfranchise black and brown children in neighborhood schools and low-income under resourced school districts. This bill seeks to balance the scales of justice which currently favor funding magnet operators, in the Sheff Region and it would protect HPS from the unjust policy which allow magnets to charge sending districts such as Hartford Public schools.

The hardships my son and I have endured through Hartford Public schools, reeks of educational neglect, isolation, teacher and systemic abuse. Covid-19 has now intensified the need for our leaders to take a serious look at the outcry for justice and equity among Hartford and CT Parents. We are tired of decisions being made for us and our children without sincere engagement of our resident voices.

Fully funding the ECS formula is necessary. It is possibly one of the primary ways in which the CT Legislative Education Committee can send a clear message to the hurting population of 21,000 Hartford students, hurting families and the broader community of stakeholders in the CT educational arena. The minority populace has been crying out for injustice for centuries and the time for change is now. We desperately need the funding to offset local school operational costs now. Communities of color have been struggling with the lack of funding, which manifest as under-resourced, poor and insufficient programming, and the filtering of our children through failing public schools. Black and brown parents want to see that achievement gap obliterated. We want to see and experience tangible improvement efforts now. We believe that excellence in education for all minority students is achievable. Today on behalf of Hartford, and CT parents, I implore you all to continue working on this bill and secure equity in funding for minority populations.

**S.B. No. 949**, I stand in support of S.B. No. 949 - An Act Concerning The Establishment Of A Money-Follows-The-Child Approach To Funding Public Education... providing that the scope of concerns includes all children and not just those in the public school system

The management of monies is at the center of educational outcomes for minority students. While this bill seeks to address the need for the money to follow the child, it is disappointing that children such as my son and countless others do not stand to benefit.

This bill zeroes in on public schools and leaves no room for addressing the hundreds of children our statewide educational system has failed. When district school consolidations and transitions based on

HPS district Model of Excellence, resulted in countless students falling through the cracks there were no safety nets in place to catch us.

I am the parent who was forced to remove my son from HPS because of neglect, teacher intimidation, lack of character development programs and overall lack of support by the district. Questions I would like to leave with the education committee today are:

- 1) Why would Ms. Natalie Langlaise fight so hard to save the Dr. Martin Luther King School from closure, and today her very own son does not enjoy the fruits of her labor?
- 2) Why is it that when one public school proved incompetent, the system is only be able to offer another underperforming school as an option?
- 3) Why is it that today, as a parent who found the best fit of school where my son can be comfortable, safe and appropriately educated, am I struggling? Isn't school choice a parental right? Why is my family being penalized and denied assistance to pay private school fees? I currently owe \$500.00 in private school fees. My child is being denied, the resources afforded to other American and even non-American students. Transportation, internet access, and school lunches are but some of the resources he needs, which I am struggling to provide.
- 4) Why am I being penalized by a system which failed to adequately see to my child's welfare safety and education while in government care? When the private school tested my son, he was a whole year behind. The public schools graded him A's B's and C's... as a fifth grader yet when tested privately he was at a fourth-grade level. Who must be held accountable for the extent of educational neglect and psychologically damaging school environment which attempted to line up my black son in the School to prison pipeline though punitive and unwarranted suspension letters and other elated educational atrocities? These questions I need answered. So many in the HPS system know of my plight and yet the pain and suffering of myself and my son go by ignored. This is unacceptable. I need you legislators to look into these matters affecting parents and make the correct and appropriate calls and decisions to rectify the wrongs in education destroying and denigrating minority families. Why must a parent be threatened by a teacher with DCF? Why was a teacher allowed to threaten me and my son with unfounded accusations? Why was I threatened with a title nine investigation? I literally had to pick up my son and run from HPS before they destroyed his character.

Please sirs/madams, do reconsider the wording of this bill. Equity in education and money to follow the child demands a broader and more sincere approach to ensure the educational welfare of ALL black and brown children; be they in public, private, magnet and/or charter schools. I need your help. The community need your help. Would your please extend a hand of compassion and understanding; and do right by the people.

**H.B. No. 6535** Please consider carefully, the ramification of policing which begins in our schools and extend to follow our youths throughout their lives. Avoid damaging character and hopes of our youths. Give hope and compassion to minority students. Blacks and Hispanics are most negatively impacted by systems of security which serve to police rather offer restorative justice and character development.

Thank you for your time and consideration; and please note I am always willing to be of service as a parent voice for equity in education for minority populations.

Sincerely Yours.

Natalie Langlaise.

